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T H E
RIGHTS and PRINCIPLES

O F

An Englishman

CONSIDERED AND ASSERTED,

On a REVIEW of the late

MOTION at the Hotel, for a COUNTY MEETING

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D E V O N S H I R E.

By A DEVONIAN.

E X E T E R :

Printed by R. TREWMAN, behind the Guildhall. 1780.

AC911. 1780, S55

To JOHN PARKER and JOHN ROLLE, Esqrs.
 REPRESENTATIVES *for the* COUNTY of DEVON.

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING troubled you more than once of late, with the Thoughts of several Freeholders of this County on public Affairs, I am afraid you will think that by another Address I incroach too much on your Time and Patience, and that I am rather impertinent in taking on myself to speak to you, in the Name of others—But it is become highly necessary that some one should speak and think too, or I fear it will soon be too late to do either, to any good Purpose. The late very extraordinary Event of the Motion made on the Day of Election by a Noble Peer, and seconded by a very respectable Gentleman, and a considerable Freeholder, will be the Subject of this Address to you, and the History of it will, I think, be worth the Notice of the Public.—Some Freeholders of the County thought that a few interesting Points, respect-

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ing the Situation of the Kingdom, and particularly the immense Expences of Government, were very necessary to be considered seriously by the County, at some Public Meeting, and that the Opinion of the Public ought to be taken on them, and some Representation made of them, either in the Form of Instructions to the Members, or of an Address or Remonstrance.—I, with many others, thought it not improper to give our Thoughts to our Members in the Shape of Instructions; and having often experienced the Necessity of some Preparation before the Day of Meeting, took the Liberty to disperse, through the County, my Sentiments in that Form, that the Subject might be digested, and a great deal of Time saved at the Meeting.--Whether I arrogated to myself too much in doing this, or not, I submit myself to the Opinion of the Public, and shall be ready to abide by their Direction in future.—The submitting those Thoughts to the Public, had this good Effect; they knew what was to be done, employed their Thoughts on the Subject, and some Gentlemen of the County thought it the most prudent Method, to confine our Complaints to as few Heads as possible, and to drop every Part, except what related

lated to the *Raising* and the *Expenditure* of the Public Money, in every Shape in which a Misapplication of it had been found.—With this Idea it was, as I understood, pretty well agreed, that the Subject of Consideration should be confined to this Proposition, or rather, to this Head of Complaint. A new Member for the County being to be chosen on Tuesday the 4th of January, and a numerous Meeting expected that Day, it was thought that when the Business was over, for which the County was called together, it would be no improper Time for mentioning in the Court, the Request to the Sheriff to call a Meeting at another Day, for considering the Business itself.—A very worthy Gentleman was consulted, as I am informed, on the Propriety of doing this at that Time, who gave his Approbation of a Meeting to consider the Proposition; but, as the Court was then very full and crowded, and many People there who were not Freeholders, he recommended that it should be mentioned after Dinner, and offered to second it himself, if the Noble Lord would move it.—Such a Proposal coming from that Gentleman, left no Room for Hesitation, what should be done. It was at once accepted and approved of, and
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on that Day after Dinner, the Hon. Lord made the following Motion, and gave his Reasons in Support of it, which was seconded by the other Gentleman, and a few Words said by him on the Subject—" That the Sheriff be requested to call a County Meeting to consider of entering into Resolutions for instructing the Members of the County, to obtain an Enquiry into the lavish Expenditure and Waste of Public Money, and the shameful Method of accounting for the same, together with the Abuse of Contracts, the superfluous Emoluments of Placemen, and various other Perversions of the Public Treasure, at a Time of the most imminent public Difficulty and Distress, and when our Enemies are carrying on a War by Means of Oeconomy, and an actual Retrenchment of unnecessary Places and State Emoluments; and likewise to shew our Inclinations to do Justice to ourselves, and Service to our Country, by supporting so just and necessary an Enquiry."—How great was *my* Surprise, as well as of many other Freeholders, to find an Opposition made to so reasonable a Proposition, as the Calling a County Meeting to consider

consider of a Matter of such Importance, which every Person present unanimously declared, they thought a great Grievance; and the greater was my Surprise, as it was attempted to be damned in the Outset by a broad No, and without One Reason given against it, except the *Inutility* of it, because the County Members were both present, and would, from that Meeting, know, and be *sufficiently instructed*, that Oeconomy was necessary to be recommended, and therefore no *other Instructions or Meeting were necessary*.—The Answer given to that Argument you have already been informed of, in TREWMAN's Paper of the 7th Instant, and was in Substance,

1st, That no Notice had been given of any such Motion to be made, or any Business discussed, on that Day, except the Election.

2dly, That a Time of Festivity and Rejoicing, was a very improper Time for *considering* such a Business, and especially *after* Dinner.

3dly, The Discussions and Resolutions on such a Business concerned the whole Kingdom, as well as this County, and therefore ought to be written and made public, that other Counties may, if they please, follow our Example.

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However the Discussion of such a Matter, at such a Time as this, soon brought on a general Confusion, and it ended in doing nothing, or coming to any Conclusion at all; though all the Company at the same Time declared it was a very right and proper Thing; that our Expences were very great, and Oeconomy the only Thing which would save us—I desire it may be understood, that I don't mean to condemn any Man's Opinion—I have an Opinion of my own, and I should be very deficient in Decency and good Manners, if I did not give to every Man the same Privilege of thinking for himself, which I assume to myself.—But you will observe, that the Question in Agitation that Day, was not, what should be done by the County at the Meeting when called, but whether the Sheriff should be requested to call one. The Sheriff behaved very fairly and impartially on the Occasion; he wished to have it done unanimously, and was only anxious not to offend any Persons; he wished to oblige the Public, and to give them an Opportunity of declaring their Sentiments on the public Affairs of this Kingdom.

Why such a Meeting was opposed, I am at a Loss to conceive, unless it was upon this
Prin-

Principle, which we have formerly heard of
 “ Those Matters are too high for you; and I
 will not have them discussed by you.” But
 shall that County, who first hospitably re-
 ceived our glorious Deliverer, who rescued us
 from the worst of Tyrannies, a Tyranny by a
 Restraint on our Thoughts and Sentiments;
 and that City, who first received *him* into her
 Bosom, lodged him, and carested him 92 Years
 ago, now oppose every Principle of Liberty,
 which he came to support, and this in the
 Reign of King George the Third, whose Title
 to the Crown depends on that Event. Let it
 never be entered on the Records of the
 County; blot it from your Memory, and let
 it be totally lost and forgotten! However, so
 it happened, and I am willing to suppose that
 the Opposers of the Motion for the Meeting,
 had their Reasons for so doing, and therefore I
 beg Leave to give my Reasons to you, and to
 the Public, in Justification of such a Meeting,
 and of the Business already begun by the
 County of York, necessary to be considered at
 such a Meeting when called; or, in other
 Words, what Right the People of England
 have to meet^d and consult on their own Situa-
 tion, and if they find themselves aggrieved, to

represent their Grievances to their Sovereign, or to instruct their Members, and to endeavour, by all proper legal Methods, to get them redressed. I trust that, in this Age, it will not be disputed, but that the People have Rights: That the King is the Chief Magistrate, but that all his Rights are derived from the People, and for their Good, and that he is their Trustee, and is to act for their Sake only. These are the Sentiments and Principles of an Englishman, and were confirmed and established at the Revolution, and I hope will never be shaken. They are fully discussed and approved by Mr. Lock, one of the best and honestest of Mankind, and if it is doubted by any, I refer him to that great Authority for Conviction. If this be so, and the supreme Magistrate is no more than a Trustee, delegated by the People for the Benefit of the Society over which he is to preside, and for whose Benefit alone he is to act, who will say that the People have not a Right to represent their Complaints and Grievances to such a Sovereign, or to the legislative Authority, which in Fact, in this Kingdom, is the supreme Authority; and what shall we say

to those who would wish to deprive the People of that Right, or, which amounts to the same Thing, to put it out of their Power to exert it. But such is the Spirit of Party, the Desire of increasing the Prerogative of the Crown, or the Attachment to ministerial Influence in this Country, which cannot be very small, when the Emoluments to them in Places, Perquisites, and Pensions, is said to be above Half a Million annually; that the Proposal was treated, as if the Fate of the County and Kingdom had depended on it. But perhaps there are some peculiar Circumstances attending the Affairs of this Kingdom at this Time, which ought to suspend the Exertion of that Right for the present; especially as we are said to be now on the *mending Hand*. One Objection made by some to the Proposal is, that the Public ought not to be disturbed at this Time, when we are at War with two great Powers, France and Spain, and America, a pretty powerful Opponent; and it may be added, at the Eve of a Rupture with Holland, and the Swedes. To this I answer, the greater and more powerful our Opponents are, and the greater the Expences of Government are, the more frugal we ought to be of

the public Money, and the more parsimonious instead of being more lavish of it, and more extravagant: Yet in the Midst of these Wars, we have encreased the Civil List 100,000l. per Ann. The Extraordinaries of the Supplies, not only in the Army Accounts, but in every Branch of the Expenditure of the public Money, are increased considerably: The Pension List is enormous; the secret Service Money amazing; and what is worse than every Thing besides, a great Part of these Expenditures are either not accounted for at all, or under such general Articles, that they afford no Satisfaction to the Public, which is just the same as if not accounted for at all. The National Debt by these Means is swelled to near two Hundred Millions, *funded Debt*, besides a monstrous Navy Debt unfunded, at 11l. per Cent. Discount for Navy Bills, all raised on the People by Usury, and supplied by Jews and Stock-Jobbers, with Douceurs in all Shapes; yet the People on whom these immense Sums are raised, are not to speak *at this Time* lest the Repose and Slumbers of the Public should be disturbed in Time of War; and lest by this Means our Military Operations should be
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check'd at Cox - Heath, Warley - Common, and Buckland-Down ; that our Fleets may air themselves, undisturbed, from Portsmouth and Plymouth to the Scilly Isles, and back again : I may add, that our Ministers may roll daily to Busby-Park, and their other Villa's ; and that the first Lord of the Admiralty may sing Catches at Midnight, without being broken in upon, in his retired Hours. As to the Affairs of the Public growing better, I wish I could see any Cause for thinking *that Part* of the Argument true in Fact. In what Part of the World are our Public Affairs growing better ? they are just the same in America, excepting that we have been obliged to abandon, as not tenable, and except that the French and Americans have not succeeded in taking the Fort at the Savanna, owing to the Bravery of our Officers and Soldiers there, whom I cannot sufficiently commend, nor commiserate enough their Hardships.—Their Sufferings are great, and Labours, I believe, *all in vain*. If the French had succeeded in that Enterprize, I suppose the whole of the American war would have been at an End, and our Army there would have infallibly been made Prisoners of War,

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or been cut to Pieces. We have lost Two of our West-India Islands, and our Fleet hath been beat off there by the French, and yet affairs are said to be better. The war is like to be protracted by some late Incidents ; our Expences by that Means increased, and I wish some other and very powerful Enemies may not be brought against us very soon, without the Addition of One single Ally. But the People must not speak, nor the Ministry be interrupted or awakened from their Repose ; the Nation are to be Bankrupts, our Trade lost, and the Manufacturers are to be starved ; the Poor Rates, by the Maintenance of the Families of the Militia-men, and the Poverty of the Manufacturers, are to be increased this Year Two-fold, and every Article of Expence almost doubled, yet our Mouths are to be stopped, lest we should see our Danger too soon. 'Tis for this Reason, I would wish the Public *may be alarmed* ; that they may be roused from the Lethargy they are got into, before we are sunk into Perdition, and have not a Foot to stand on. When the Enemy is at the Gate we have some Chance of keeping him out ; but if he once gets in, Farewell England ; Farewell
Public

Public Credit and Trade. There is nothing so bad for a Kingdom as Luxury and Supineness; We have them both upon us strong enough, God knows it.—When Indolence and Idleness, Gaming and Luxury, get a fast Hold on private People, it soon becomes a national Evil, and the same Maladies which prevail to a Degree among the *People* in general, will soon carry its Infection to the *State*: Their Resources will soon be run out, and we shall be made an easy Prey, by a watchful Enemy, who is never at Rest, and who never slumbers nor sleeps.—This is the true State of our Public Affairs, and to remedy them, as well as we can, by a sober and serious Consideration and Consultation on the Means of remedying some, or all of those Evils, I hope will be the End and Consequence of such a public Meeting, which I heartily wish to see encouraged by this, and every County of England.

I fear I trespass too much on your Patience, but I have only One Thing more to say:—It is given out that this public Address, or Instructions, are encouraged as necessary and proper at this Time, by those who are anti-ministerial Men, who want Places themselves, and, to obtain them, wish to inflame the Public,

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lic, and to discredit the Proceedings of the King's Ministers.—This is an Argument which will ever be used by Men in Power and their Friends, who do not desire that their Operations should be disputed, or their Conduct overhauled.—I can answer for myself, that I have no such Wishes, no such Views in what I say on this Occasion. If there are any who adopt such Principles, and encourage those Wishes on any selfish or sinister Views and Motives, I give them up and disavow them and their Motives.—But surely it is no Objection to a Plan, good and proper in itself, because it may be made an ill Use of by ill-disposed People.—It is the *Measures* of Government I mean to object to, not to the *Men*, unless they justify and avow pernicious Measures.—Those who do so, are as blameable as the Measures complained of, and ought to be removed, unless they see their Error and pursue a different Plan. To attain this End, is my only View and Aim; I care not who is the Minister, if he pursues good Measures, and consults the public Good. The King must have Ministers, but I hope he will not employ or support any, against the Voice of his People, and a Conviction of their doing ill. The Principles I act upon, are those of
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the Revolution; I mean an Opposition and Resistance to Measures, not to Men.—Those Principles have saved this Nation Once from Ruin and Slavery, and had it not been for the American War, we should now have been a happy People.—If I act on wrong Principles, I am open to Conviction, and will alter them when I am convinced, but not till I am convinced. Those who cannot point out better, I hope will act on mine, and not suspect me of selfish Views or Party Attachments; I declare I have none, and despise them.

The Instructions which were sent out to the Public, were on Three Points.—Perhaps this County may wish to have them more confined, and may think at this Time, that the great Expences and Demands on the Public, and the Expenditure of the public Money, should be the only Subject of the present Instructions.—I have printed them at the End, as they were originally designed, and now take the Liberty to point out, how they may be confined to this Grievance, which every Person seems to agree ought to be redressed; and, I hope, the Gentlemen and Freeholders will think, that this

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ought to be adopted, and seriously considered in
as full a Meeting, as the Times and Seasons
will admit of. I am, GENTLEMEN,

With great Regard,

Your most obedient,

And humble Servant,

A DEVONIAN.

To JOHN PARKER and JOHN ROLLE, *Esqrs.*

REPRESENTATIVES in PARLIAMENT for the
COUNTY of DEVON.

GENTLEMEN,

WE, the Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders,
and principal Inhabitants of the County
of Devon, whose Names are affixed to this Ad-
dress, beg Leave to transmit to you our Senti-
ments on the State of the Kingdom in general,
and of this County in particular. We make no
Apology for taking this Method of conveying
our Sentiments to you, and through you to the
Public, because we think, that to the Idea of
Constituent and Representative, the Privilege
of instructing is necessarily joined, and we hope
that these our Sentiments will be seriously at-
tended to by you, and that from your Endeavours and Abilities the Mischiefs complained
of will be redressed.

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This [*printed in Italics, and within Crotchets*] may be omitted, if the County pleases, in the Instructions.

[We think that the great Source of all our Misfortunes (if that may be called a Misfortune which has been brought upon us by our own Means) is the War with America. The unnatural Contest with a People under the same Government and Laws with ourselves; the Distance of the Two Countries from each other; the very extraordinary Expence occasioned by that Distance; the Want of Alliances and Assistance from any One Province of that extensive Country; the Loss of that commercial Connection which before these Differences was very beneficial to this Kingdom; and the Improbability of Success, proved to us by fatal Experience and various Miscarriages, are such strong Proofs of the Impropriety and Disadvantages attending it, that we cannot help most earnestly recommending to you, by all prudent and cautious Methods, to endeavour, as much as you can, that an End be put to this most fatal and destructive War.]

The Inactivity, and indeed Deficiency of our Navy, manifested to all the World by the Operations of our Enemies and the Disgrace of our Fleets the last Summer, is an alarming Consideration to
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the whole Kingdom.—Who would have believed in the Year 1760, that in the Year 1779 the French Fleet would anchor before One of our principal Sea-ports and One of the Bulwarks of this Kingdom, and would drive an English Fleet, consisting of near Forty Ships of the Line, from the Mouth of the British Channel to Spithead, with a crowded Sail, and without One Attempt to engage them. If the Commander of that Fleet had proper Instructions from Administration to do his Duty, as a British Commander, his Conduct ought to be enquired into; if he was confined and limited in his Orders and Instructions, the Conduct of those who advised such Orders ought to be made known to the Public, and their Reasons for issuing them ought to be given.

The Public were repeatedly told, that our Fleets would be sufficient to protect us and our Colonies against the united Force of all our Enemies; the Supplies granted were great, and sufficient to support such a Fleet; the Public have therefore a Right to know, why they have been deceived, and why such a national Disgrace has been brought upon us.

Without such an Inquiry, what Security have we to expect a better Conduct from this Administration the next Year? Or what Hopes, that the enormous

enormous Supplies now to be granted, will be expended to any greater Advantage than those granted the last and preceding Years.]

The enormous Expences, and the great national Debt, are other very serious and striking Circumstances, and Proofs of the Mismanagement of Public Affairs, and of the approaching Ruin of this Kingdom.—What Minister in 1740, would have ventured to demand from the People of this Country, upwards of Twenty Millions in One Year? Or what Minister would have then thought that Great Britain could have supported a Public Debt of near Two Hundred Millions?—The Truth is, we had then Ministers who considered not the Possibility of raising such Supplies, but the Propriety of making such Demands, not what England *could do*, but what she *ought to do*, consistent with the Trade and landed Interest of the Kingdom.—The Event has proved the Impropriety of such a Supply.—The Interest necessary to discharge the national Debt, now to be raised annually, is as much as the whole Supplies were during the War with France and Spain.—The Nation is sinking under the Public Expences, whilst Individuals are enriching

riching themselves from the Distresses of the Public, by Loans and Contracts.

The trading Part of the Nation are becoming Bankrupts daily and hourly; the Land is loaded with immense Taxes at the Time when the Civil List is increased One Hundred thousand Pounds *per Annum*, and the Places of those in Administration are almost doubled in Profit by the Advantages accruing to their Employments, from the great Sums raised on the Public.

We cannot but observe to you, that this Subject and another of equal Importance, the extraordinary Demands for the Supplies, and the Dissipation of the public Money, have lately undergone public Discussion in the House of Lords, and are now the Subject and Concern of the whole Kingdom. Under a feeling Conviction of the Necessity of the most rigid Oeconomy in future, in every Branch of the Expenditure of the public Money, we recommend these Subjects to your serious Attention, and we conjure you by every Tie which forms the Relation between us, to give your strenuous Support to every Measure that may conduce to the Diminution, if not to the Prevention of the unnecessary and ruinous Profusion,

sion, with which it has been too frequently dissipated.

These are Considerations of too serious a Nature to be called the Suggestions of disappointed Patriots and discarded Placemen, Terms now-a-days given to every good Measure proposed for the Reformation of national Evils.

This County, we hope, has some Public Virtue yet remaining, and expects your most diligent and attentive Application to effectuate a Reformation in these great Articles of public Expence, and more especially, as notwithstanding all these great Expences, we have been told lately, and the Fact so appears, that we have not at this Time one Ally to assist us against the combined Force of *France, Spain, and America*.

These are the Outlines of what, not only this County, but the People of *England*, have a Right to expect from your Assistance, as Members of the *British* Parliament. As Representatives of this County, we cannot help reminding you of the very defective State, in point of Defence, of the whole County on the Sea-Coast, and of *Plymouth* in particular, at a Time when we had been threatened with an
Invasion

Invasion from abroad, and alarmed with it at home for near Twelve Months. — You, Gentlemen, know the Situation of our Coasts, and of one of our Arsenals at that alarming Time, when if Providence had not done more for us than we did for ourselves, the *Dock* and *Plymouth* might have been destroyed.

The Fact is too well known *here* to be denied, however it may have been endeavoured to be palliated *elsewhere* by Artifice and Falsehood.

[The following in Italics may be omitted if you please]

[After such a glaring Instance of Neglect and Inattention to the Defence of One of the principal Ports of the Kingdom, as well as to the State of our Navy, at the Time of a French and Spanish War; who can place any Confidence in our Rulers and Governors, when the Common Means necessary for the Defence of the Kingdom are thus neglected and despised?]







